

A. Background

BLM Office: Arctic Field Office LLAKF010

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: FF097050

Applicant: Robert Busby, Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS)
1200 New York Ave, NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC, 20005

Proposed Action Title/Type: EarthScope: Transportable Array (USArray) Reconnaissance Field Work / NPR-A Permit (298401)

Dates of Proposed Activity: August 15 – October 15, 2015

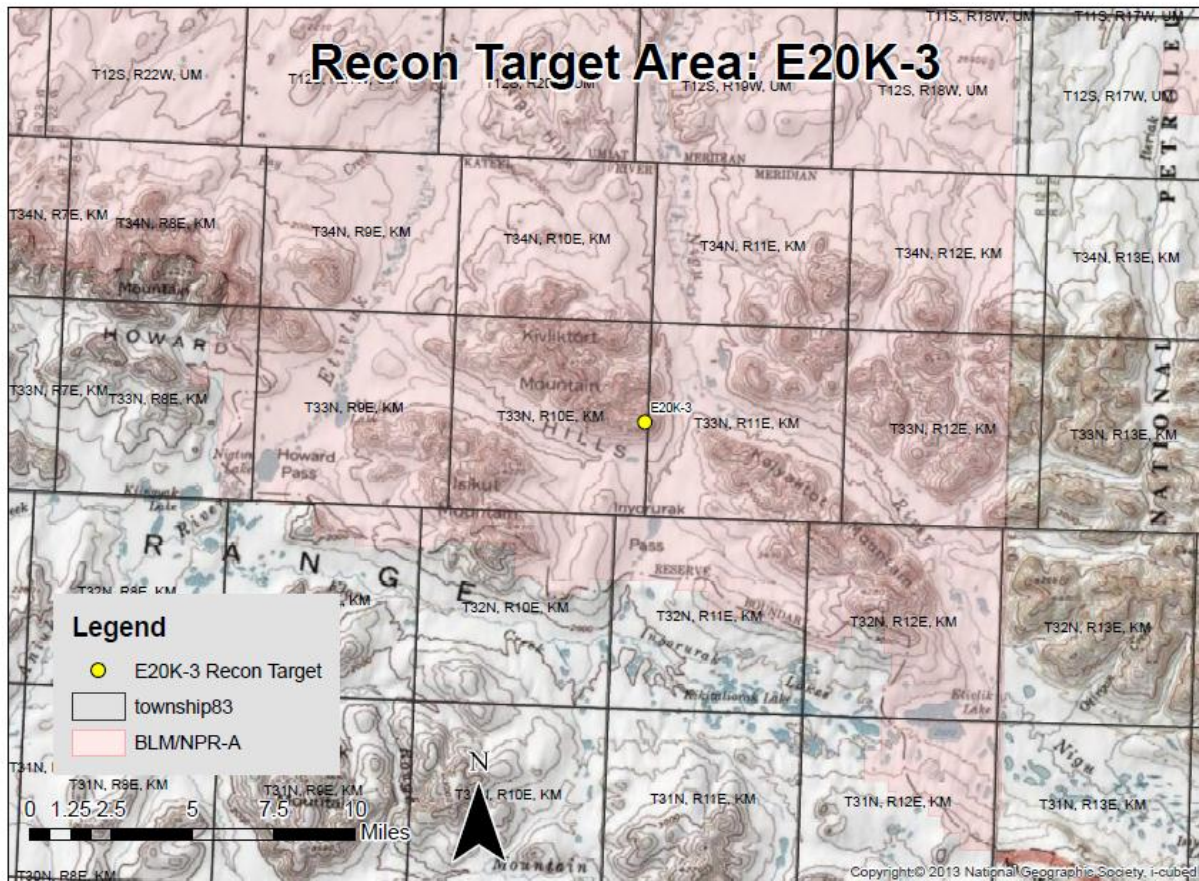
General Location of Proposed Action: 1 to 3 locations within 14 radial miles of 68.24998°, 156.43567° – NPR-A

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant, Robert Busby, Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS), has requested authorization for field activity and access to conduct reconnaissance field work, within the NPR-A. The reconnaissance would take place at 1 to 3 locations within 14 radial miles of 68.24998°, -156.43567° (Figure 1). The purpose of the reconnaissance is to determine the suitability of the site for the installation of a Transportable Array Seismic Station (Figure 2) in 2016 or 2017.

One to 2 field staff and a pilot will travel via helicopter to general locations identified as preferable for installation. The helicopter will land (up to 6 take off and landings) in specific sites identified as suitable from the air within the vicinity of those locations. General protocol is to spend less than an hour on the ground at each site to record observations of geology, access, natural features, and project-specific details of the site; to take 6-10 photographs; and to note the coordinates of the site. No objects will be collected and no ground will be disturbed.

The establishment of field camps is not expected. Field crews will be staying overnight in local communities. There will be no aircraft refueling or fuel cached on BLM lands. In the event that public facilities are available for the disposal of any waste mentioned herein, e.g. waste transfer stations, recycling centers, sewer/septic systems, gray water systems, etc., USArray crew members will adhere to local laws regarding disposal of waste. IRIS has an established Emergency Response Plan that would be put into effect if needed.

Due to the remoteness of this location there has been no specific consultation with local communities about this reconnaissance effort. However, due to the large scope of the overall project general consultations have occurred with several agencies (NPS, FWS, DNR, BLM, etc.) and Native Corporations (ARSC, NANA, Doyon, etc.).



Recon target area encompasses the NPR-A land (red) within 14 radial miles from point E20K-3 (68.24998, -156.43567)

Figure 1: Reconnaissance target area

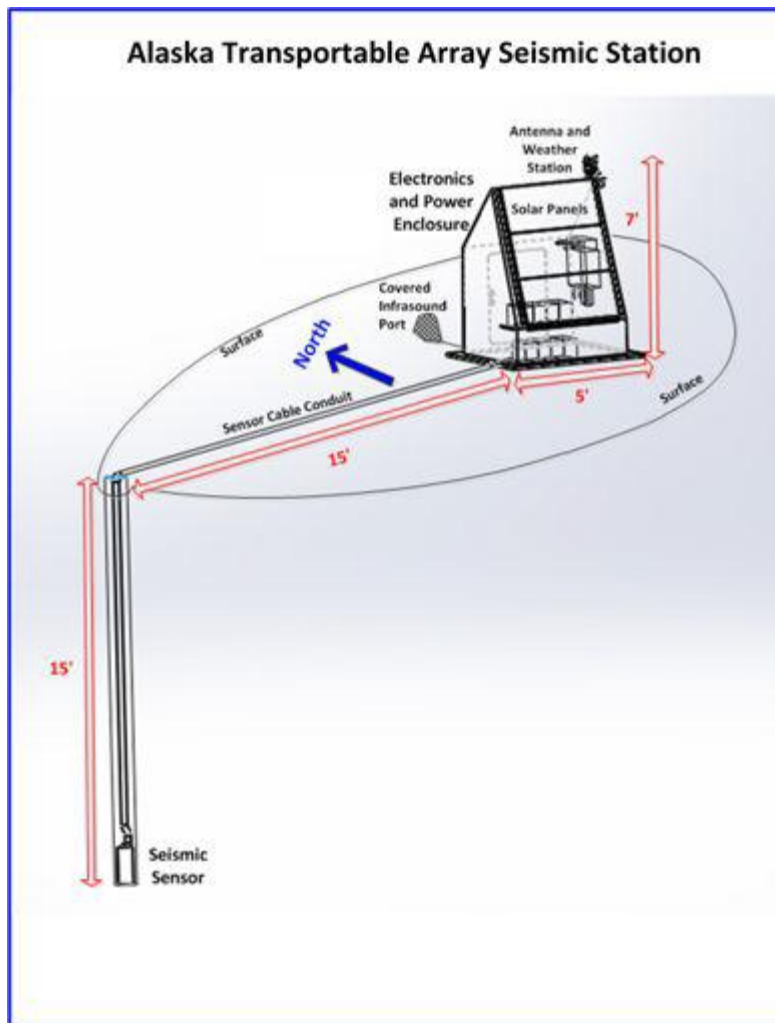


Figure 2. Transportable Array Seismic Station

Legal Description:

Meridian	Township	Range	Sections
Umiat	12 South	22 West	1-30
Umiat	12 South	21 West	1-30
Umiat	12 South	20 West	1-30
Umiat	12 South	19 West	1-30
Umiat	12 South	18 West	1-30 (NPR-A Only)
Kateel River	34 North	8 East	7-32, 36 (NPR-A Only)
Kateel River	34 North	9 East	7-36
Kateel River	34 North	10 East	7-36
Kateel River	34 North	11 East	7-36
Kateel River	34 North	12 East	7-11, 14-23, 26-35
Kateel River	33 North	8 East	1, 11-14, 23-26, 36 (NPR-A Only)
Kateel River	33 North	9 East	1-36)NPR-A Only
Kateel River	33 North	10 East	1-36
Kateel River	33 North	11 East	1-36
Kateel River	33 North	12 East	2-11, 14-23, 26-35

Kateel River	32 North	9 East	1-4, 11-12 (NPR-A Only)
Kateel River	32 North	10 East	1-7, 10-15 (NPR-A Only)
Kateel River	32 North	11 East	1-16, 24 (NPR-A Only)
Kateel River	32 North	12 East	1-28, 33-36 (NPR-A Only)
Kateel River	31 North	12 East	1-4, 9-16, 23-24 (NPR-A Only)

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the following planning document: National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) dated November 2012 and associated Record of Decision dated February 2013.

The proposed action is in conformance with the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act, which allows for the authorization of uses consistent with the purposes of the Act.

C. Compliance with NEPA

The IAP/EIS Record of Decision for the NPR-A developed stipulations and best management practices applicable to all activities in NPR-A. The stipulations and best management practices applicable to the proposed action will be provided, along with project-specific mitigation, to the applicant and are entitled: "FF097050 IRIS Summer 2015 NPR-A Permit Stipulations."

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, or 516 DM 11.9. Specifically the proposed action meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, BLM H-1790-1 National Environmental Policy Act Handbook Appendix 4(F-10) BLM Categorical Exclusions.

"Nondestructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial, and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research, and monitoring activities."

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

Extraordinary Circumstances	Yes	No
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2.2 Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].		X

2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
2.7 Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).		X
2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		X

D. Approval and Contact Information

I considered the proposed action and have determined that there is no potential for significant impacts.

/s/
 Stacie McIntosh
 Authorized Officer, Arctic Field Office

8/26/2015
 Date

Contact Person:

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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